

THE GOLDEN BANTAM

By Eva Morse Henricks

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"And then you pulled his pigtail!"

"Yes, dear, and then all three scampered."

"And the cute little yellow man?"

"Wang Fo? He dropped to his knees and kissed my hand and said I was his preserver and gave me the golden bantam."

Little Flora Ward sat in the lap of her great friend, Alvin Prescott, immensely interested in quite a tragic recital. He was telling her of an encounter in a dark side street the evening before with three sinister Chinamen. They had backed another yellow-hued countryman against a brick wall. One of the assailants held his throat in a talon-like clutch. A second had imprisoned his arms. A third was advancing to dispatch him with a glittering steel knife when Prescott intervened.

"And what was the golden bantam, Mr. Prescott?" lisped the interested little one.

Prescott fumbled in his pocket. Eager eyes scanned the odd-looking pin he drew forth. It represented a bantam rampant, with curious script characters on its outspread wings.

"I think the three wicked men were highbinders, my dear," explained Prescott, "that is, men belonging to a cruel society who make a business of killing people they don't like. Poor Wang Fo, as he called himself, must belong to some other secret society. I suppose the golden bantam is its emblem, for he kept saying that the bantam pin 'would make me friends with all his people.'"

"What a cute little pin it is," said Flora effusively.

"Well, you shall have the trinket," replied Prescott, and pinned it on a band of ribbon at her neck.

"Oh, how good you are!" cried Flora ecstatically, and jumped to the floor and ran over to where a charm-

ing young lady was busy at some fancy work. "See, Aunt Lydia—the beautiful pin Mr. Prescott has given me!"

"You are spoiling the child, Mr. Prescott," spoke Miss Ward; but with an indulgent smile.

He did not reply, but his eyes met her own with a rapt, longing expression. She read its meaning—love—not only for the little one, but for herself as well. He seemed about to



"I Have Found Her."

speak. The memory of what had fol-
Prescott to control his deep emotion.
lowed an offer of marriage caused
Soon he left the house.

It was hard to be about daily in the company of the woman he so devotedly loved and refrain from urging her to reconsider her decision. It had been announced in a kindly way, so considerably, in fact, that Prescott half believed that but for circumstances Lydia might have favored his